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**EDUCATION REFORM LEADERS BECOME ACHIEVEMENT FIRST'S
CHIEF EXTERNAL OFFICER, CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER**

*Chastity Lord and Tracy Epp Bring Senior Experience to Shape
External Engagement and Ensure Excellence in Schools*

JUNE 19, 2012—New York, NY—Achievement First, a high-performing network of 20 college-preparatory public charter schools serving more than 6,200 students in New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island (starting in 2013), today announced the recent addition of Chastity Lord as its chief external officer and Tracy Epp as its chief academic officer.

In her role as chief external officer, Ms. Lord is charged with leading the teams directly involved with external relations, marketing and communications, development, partnerships, and expansion. Prior to joining Achievement First, she was a regional vice president for The Posse Foundation, Inc., a national organization that identifies urban public high school students with academic and leadership potential who may be overlooked by the traditional college admission process. In her role as regional vice president, Ms. Lord was responsible for overseeing the Posse sites in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Before joining Posse, she served as the mid-Atlantic regional director for The New Teacher Project (TNTP), a non-profit educational consulting firm that partners with urban school districts, states and other governmental entities to enhance their capacity to recruit, select, train and support outstanding new teachers. Directly before TNTP, Ms. Lord was the director of program services for Mentors, Inc., a non-profit organization that promotes the academic, career and personal development of public high school students through one-on-one mentoring relationships and enrichment activities.

Ms. Lord earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Oklahoma and an M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

“Hands down partnership is what attracted me to Achievement First—the ‘partnership’ with school districts and their commitment to creating ‘citizens’ within and outside of the Achievement First network,” says Ms. Lord. “In a lot of ways, I see Achievement First as an extension of the work I have already been doing; I am now entering the education reform conversation at the K-12 level.”

As chief academic officer, Ms. Epp is charged with ensuring the alignment of curriculum, assessment and teacher development so that all Achievement First schools reach their ambitious student achievement goals. Before joining Achievement First, she served as the

chief academic officer for IDEA Public Schools, a network of Texas public charter schools that prepares students from underserved communities for success and citizenship. At IDEA, Ms. Epp served as both the founding principal for the network's flagship high school, IDEA College Prep, and as a member of IDEA Academy's founding Board of Directors.

Ms. Epp has also served both as a program director and as a member of the national program team at Teach For America, where she coached new teachers and assisted in the early development of metrics around teacher effectiveness. In her work as a consultant for non-profits like The New Teacher Project, The Texas High School Project and Citizen Schools, she aided in the design of teacher evaluation systems and helped a national extended-day program revamp its model and increase its impact on middle school students' academic achievement.

Ms. Epp holds a bachelor's degree from Case Western Reserve University, an M. Ed. from the University of Texas-Pan American and an Ed. D. from the University of Texas at Austin.

“Achievement First has made a promise to the families we serve that, with their partnership, we will ensure their child is ready to make it to and through a competitive college or university and be a leader in our community,” says Ms. Epp. “In order to deliver on this promise, we have to be able to scale our schools in such a way that ensures quality teaching and learning while empowering our school leaders and teachers. I am excited to help Achievement First with this important work as we prepare to expand our impact to more communities and schools.”

About Achievement First

The mission of Achievement First is to close the achievement gap and deliver on the promise of equal educational opportunity for all children, regardless of race, economic status or zip code. With its college-preparatory focus, the Achievement First approach is attaining breakthrough academic gains throughout its network of 20 public charter schools. In the 2011-12 academic year, Achievement First is educating more than 6,200 children in historically low-performing and underserved neighborhoods in Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island (starting in 2013).

Achievement First's approach to teaching and learning enables every student to succeed at the highest levels. This involves:

- Providing students with more time on task and intense intervention when they are struggling so that no child falls through the cracks.
- Recruiting and developing successful teachers and school leaders and empowering them to use student data to strategically drive instruction.
- Creating a joyful school culture where it is “cool to be smart” that emphasizes character education and focuses students on college.



For more information about Achievement First, please visit www.achievementfirst.org.

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